

THE EYES OF THE BLIND

By John Cameron

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Everybody in Erpingham pitied Dorothy Lee. She was a sweet girl, and it was agreed that it was a great pity she was so homely.

"It ain't a fair handicap," said old Mrs. Howell, who kept the post office. "It's hard enough for a girl to get married in New England, anyway, but with her looks—I say it ain't fair."

Dorothy's father probably indorsed this view, but the hard-headed old farmer was too practical a man to worry about his daughter's looks. Dorothy lived alone with him, her mother being dead. What she thought on the subject she never disclosed. She must have known, however, that there was a reason why she was always a wall-flower at parties and was never invited on picnics and such festivities.

When she was twenty-five Tom Lanark came home after an absence of six years in the West.

Fabulous stories preceded him. He had found a gold mine in Nevada, one of the richest in the world, it was said, and the glare of the sun on the alkali plains had seared his eyeballs until he could only distinguish light from darkness. So he had come back at thirty, to resume life—no, not to resume it, but to take up its burden alone in the old house that had given him birth.

With the best will, in the world few people, after the first greetings, could spare the time to visit a blind man. Tom Lanark was not so helpless as to need a body servant, and that made his loneliness still more pathetic.

"I wonder what Margaret Barnet'll have to say to him now," said the village gossips.

Margaret Barnett had been an old flame of Tom's in the bygone days. But if there was any idea that she would link her life to a blind man's

Margaret, who was "running" with the banker's son, dismissed it promptly.

"I want a live one when I get married," she said. And Dorothy witnessed a snubbing which Margaret administered to Tom in the street, in front of her house.

She saw the blind man trying to peer after the girl whose shrill, scornful laughter echoed through the quiet street, and an excess of pity over-



Trying to Peer After the Girl

came her shrinking, and she hurried out.

"Mr. Lanark," she said quickly, conscious that her words were almost beyond her control, "I am Dorothy Lee. Don't you remember me?"

Tom Lanark felt for her hands and took them in his. "Indeed I do," he answered warmly. "I have often thought of you since I have been away."